

March 22, 2018

Exhibit 13

**From:** Jeffery Rach  
**Sent:** Friday, March 9, 2018 11:30 AM  
**Subject:** invasive species

I have been outfitting on Flathead lake for 39 years. This invasive species fee imposed on the non resident fisherman is the most unfair fee I have ever seen and it is sickening . The non resident fisherman are the most unlikely people to introduce invasive species. They hire guides and do not bring boats in to fish. You are hurting the fishing guides in a big way. For example A family of 4 now pays and extra \$200. just for licenses.

If you are serious about controlling the invasive species, why are you not targeting all the other boats such as speed boats with ballasts tanks which do bring in invasive species ? AGAIN this is totally unfair to the non resident who would like to experience the wonderful fishing Montana has to offer.

SICKENING

Jeff Rach  
Flathead Lake Charters

Don Lepinsky  
P.O. Box 771  
Whitehall MT, 59759

March 21, 2018

Environmental Quality Council  
Helena MT, 59601

Greetings,

My name is Don Lepinsky. I am a retired aircraft mechanic enjoying life on our public lands and waterways. I enjoy a variety of sporting activities including kayaking.

I believe that maintaining an aquatic invasive species (AIS) program is paramount to whatever type of mechanism is used to fund the program. Currently that I'm aware of, revenue is generated for this program from resident and nonresident fishing licenses, and fees received from those who generate and or purchase hydroelectricity. This seems to me to be an efficient mechanism for funding the AIS program.

It has been brought to my attention that the Montana Electrical Coop Association, (MECA) will be lobbying the state to reduce or eliminate their contributions to the AIS program. MECA's justification is that fees would be more fairly distributed if paid by a broader base of the of the state's population, and by recreationalists who enjoy our rivers, lakes and streams. I'm not buying this justification.

Like the vast majority of us, I purchase and use electricity. I have been informed that the fees paid by Northwest Energy and MECA members which is passed on to electrical customers' amounts to about 25 cents a month or \$3 a year for individual households and or electricity consumers. This cost does not seem excessive to me. Since the vast majority of us use and pay for electricity directly or indirectly, it also seems to me that the vast majority of us are already paying our fair share of the cost of the program through this revenue generating mechanism.

If the current AIS revenue generating mechanism is not broke, don't fix it or replace it with a more convoluted mechanism. However, if the council determines that Northwest Energy and MECA are being unfairly taxed, please do not recommend to the legislature a replacement mechanism that is less efficient and more complicated.

If the council recommends fees be placed on non-motorized watercraft like my 11 foot in length kayak, I would like to suggest that you recommend to the legislature to look into cooperation with neighboring states who are also combating AIS. Last summer I floated that portion of the Snake located in Wyoming with my family. I was assessed an out of state AIS fee of \$15 for the one time I floated the Snake last summer. When visiting neighboring states, I envision a scenario where Idaho, Montana and Wyoming would inspect our small non-motorized watercraft as needed and either waive the fee if we have paid our home state fee, or just assess us for that states resident fee.

In conclusion, no matter what you decide on a funding mechanism, I would like to emphasize that an ongoing AIS program is of primary importance to me with the revenue mechanism being secondary. Our pristine lakes and rivers are priceless to me. We should be doing everything we can to keep them that way.

Sincerely, Don Lepinsky

Date: 3/13/2018

From: Dr. Vicki Watson, aquatic ecologist

RE: Funding for Montana's Aquatic Invasive Species Program

Environmental Quality Council (EQC) members are well aware of the potentially devastating impacts of invasive mussels on Montana's fish and wildlife and economy (hydropower, tourism, agriculture, property values). Funding for the AIS management program must be adequate, sustainable, and drawn both from those who contribute to the risk as well as those who will be most impacted if the mussels, or other AIS, gain a foothold here.

Since the greatest risk of AIS spread comes from watercraft, most states have concluded that it is reasonable to charge a fee to watercraft to help cover the cost of the program. Many states fund about half of their AIS program with watercraft fees. The other half is funded from general funds – which recognizes the potential impact of AIS such as mussels to many sectors of the economy.

In Montana, we have noted that impacts would be particularly severe on fishing tourism and on hydropower generation, and so have chosen to have these parts of the economy directly contribute to fighting AIS. Hence fishing fees and hydroelectric fees that go to AIS management constitute a wise investment on the part of these industries. The cost to hydropower consumers of supporting the AIS program will almost certainly be less than the cost of dealing with the mussels once established. And anglers and outfitters are well aware that mussel invasion could spell the end of fishing as we know it.

The main source of funding that I think should be added to the above sources is watercraft fees. Watercraft contribute much of the risk of AIS invasions, and watercraft users would be negatively impacted by these invasions.

Providing funding from this balance of sources has the best chance of being equitable and sustainable. I hope you will recommend such a balance of funding for the AIS program.  
Thank you for your service.

Dr. Vicki Watson,  
retired UM aquatic ecologist (affiliation noted for identification purposes only)  
volunteer science advisor to Clark Fork Coalition